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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

DPC 250

ON THE RECORD UNLESS OTHERWISE INDICATED

TRANSCRIPT OF PRESS AND RADIO NEWS BRIEFING, MONDAY,
NOVEMBER 19, 1962, 4:59 p.m.

MR. WHITE: Gentlemen, the Department emphatically denies a report attributed to US authorities that characterized Soviet answers in recent negotiations as "confused, evasive, and unsatisfactory."

Talks are continuing. No responsible US authority has authorized any discussion of the talks at all.

Now, on a background basis, let me add one other point:

You will recall that I was asked at noon whether we had made clear to the Soviets that we hope to have a satisfactory reply from them concerning the IL-28's today or tomorrow. I replied that we certainly have. I am afraid that I was mistaken about that.

We have repeatedly made clear to the Soviets that we regard the IL-28's as offensive weapons and as such that they should be removed from Cuba. The point I am making is that in this context we did not say that we expected a satisfactory reply in the next day or two.

That is all I have, gentlemen.

Q Linc, for background, or off the record, or what have you, can you identify the source of this report about "confused, evasive, and unsatisfactory"?

A One of the wire services, AP.

Q Now, what does this mean, "No responsible US authority has authorized any discussion of the talks at all"? I am confused, because I think this is evasive. You are denying what, Linc?

A Denying that any US authorities have said that Soviet answers in recent negotiations are confused and evasive. I, myself, said on a background basis today that we have as yet not received a satisfactory reply.

Q So the Soviets answers are neither confused nor evasive, nor are they unsatisfactory; is that correct?

A No. No.

Q They have not replied.

A What I said is that we have not as yet received a satisfactory reply. I did not say they were confused or evasive.

Q I am too simple. In my book there are only three things, either they didn't answer at all--then I can understand what you are saying. Or they answered something, then the answer is either satisfactory or

unsatisfactory. Is that correct, that they didn't answer at all?

A I have said that we have had no satisfactory reply.

Q Then what you are really objecting to is the words "confused and evasive"?

A That is right.

Q Not the answer; all right.

Q Would you say the Soviet reply was fuzzy and unresponsive?

A No, I say we have as yet had no satisfactory reply.

Q Would you deny that they are fuzzy and irresponsible?

A I say we have/yet had no satisfactory reply--don't categorize their replies in any way other than as unsatisfactory in the sense that we have had no satisfactory reply.

Q In connection with your saying "No responsible US authority has authorized any discussion of the talks at all," you are excepting what we are talking about now, aren't you?

A That is right.

Q This is an authorized discussion of the

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talks?

A That is right. That is right.

Q And what was said this morning about the feeling that some reply today or tomorrow would be helpful was sort of a statement of our position, and not something that was conveyed to the Russians?

A That is right.

Q To the best of your knowledge?

A That is right.

Q Except by you?

A That is right. You see--let's just go over this thing again.

[At this point Mr. White reviewed what was stated at the noon conference.]

Q Thank you, Linc.

A You are very welcome, sirs.

[Whereupon at 5:08 p.m., the meeting was adjourned.]

ECR:richard